

A NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE RUFFED GROUSE.

BY OUTRAM BANGS.

SOME years ago I was accustomed to go shooting every autumn in Nova Scotia, and each season I was more and more impressed by the very dark coloration of the Ruffed Grouse killed there. I therefore made into skins during my last two shooting trips to this province a series of sixteen Grouse.

I am very sorry to say I did not skin any young individuals but picked out old birds of both sexes, selecting them one or two at a time from our daily bags which were often large.

Upon comparing specimens the Nova Scotia bird proved to be quite as different from *Bonasa umbellus togata* (Linn.) as that form is from *Bonasa umbellus umbellus* (Linn.), and has been described in MS. as a new subspecies for years. The reason it has not until now been published is that Mr. Brewster had in contemplation a monograph of the Ruffed Grouse for which he had, for a long time, been gathering material, and the new form was to have appeared in it. This project is now indefinitely postponed and the Nova Scotia Grouse may be known as:—

***Bonasa umbellus thayeri*¹ subsp. nov.**

Type, from Digby, Nova Scotia, adult ♂, no. 11453, Bangs Coll., Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. Collected Oct. 9, 1892, by O. Bangs.

Characters. Similar to *Bonasa umbellus togata* (Linn.) but general color, of upper parts darker, more dusky or sooty, less grayish; the whole under parts (except throat) heavily and regularly banded with dusky, the dark bands much blacker and much more boldly contrasted against the ground color — less blended.

In *B. umbellus togata* the flanks and sides are sometimes barred as heavily and the bars are as dark in color as in the Nova Scotia form, but this heavy barring never extends to the chest, breast or middle of belly.

Size and proportions about as in *B. umbellus togata* except the bill which averages just a little larger.

B. umbellus thayeri presents two phases of coloration, which are both

¹ Named for my esteemed friend and co-worker in ornithology, John E. Thayer.

very dark, and not very different; a phase in which there is much dull chestnut or burnt sienna in the upper parts and tail and another in which the tail is wholly dull gray and black and the upper parts are but little varied with dark chestnut markings. The color and markings of the underparts is not different in the two phases, except that very reddish birds sometimes have the bases of the feathers of the upper chest dull chestnut instead of dusky.

Measurements.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Sex.</i>	<i>Wing.</i>	<i>Tail.</i>	<i>Tarsus.</i>	<i>Exposed Culmen.</i>	<i>Culmen to base of forehead.</i>
11453	♂ ad. Type	184.	157.	50.	15.5	27.
11454	♂ ad. Topotype	181.	163.	48.	16.	28.
11456	♂ ad. "	186.	150.	49.	14.5	25.
11459	♂ ad. "	181.	165.	45.	15.	26.5
11452	♂ ad. "	178.	150.	46.	15.	26.
11462	♀ ad. "	180.	132.	45.	12.5	23.
11465	♀ ad. "	179.	124.	46.	12.5	22.
11461	♀ ad. "	174.	130.	46.	14.	23.5
11463	♀ ad. "	173.	123.	46.	12.5	22.
11466	♀ ad. "	169.	126.	44.	13.	23.

Remarks. The Canadian Ruffed Grouse, *Tetrao togatus* of Linnaeus was based wholly upon Brisson's *Lagopus bonalia canadensis* of "Canada." The type locality being without doubt, the region between Montreal and Quebec. There are in Mr. Brewster's collection two fine adult males from the vicinity of Quebec, which are in every way similar to numbers of skins from Maine, Vermont, northern New York, New Hampshire and the higher interior parts of Massachusetts with which I have compared them.

It is probable that the new form is confined to the almost insular province of Nova Scotia, although I cannot be sure about the bird from the coast of New Brunswick as the specimens I have before me are in worn midsummer plumage, and not comparable with the Nova Scotia specimens, all of which were taken in October.